



EDITORIAL

Are you running an airline?

The office was slow yesterday, I was tired of doing well-child visits, so I closed at 2:00. While driving home, I stopped at Starbucks and ordered a latte. The bedraggled counter person said coffee was not being served today, but how about a tomato juice?

The passenger count on my Delta flight was so light my plane was canceled and used on a flight to Charleston.

If you are wondering what these scenarios have to do with you and your office, take this simple test:

POP QUIZ: Which of the following are true of your practice?

- I am open over the lunch hour to accommodate the increasing number of harried working adults
- My patients spend less than 15 minutes waiting in my office (*total* wait time—include waiting room time, time waiting in your exam room, and time waiting for testing)
- Patients can call in the same day for their appointments
- Information is gathered once in your office and available immediately to all of your staff
- You use the Internet to allow patients to make their appointments and receive their routine lab results
- I have a complete database on all my patients which is updated at every visit
- I offer integrated laboratory and ancillary services—I am a one-stop shop for all my patient's health care needs, from mental health to holter monitoring
- Every phone call is answered by a real live person within 3 rings (subtract 3 points if your face to the world is an automated answering machine)
- Every established patient is addressed by their preferred name
- New patients are personally oriented to your practice.

Add up the "yes" responses and score as follows:

- 1–3 (enroll in an Institute for Healthcare Improvement Course)
- 4–6 (order a book on lean thinking, advanced access scheduling or group visits)
- 7–8 (you have already been to an IHI course and are serious about your patient's satisfaction)
- 9 (you teach an IHI course)
- 10 (e-mail me and share your story!)

In the meantime, I'll be waiting for the next flight to Cincinnati...


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